

BOOKS OF INTEREST SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS

CONCERNING PAINTING. By Kenyon Cox. (Charles Scribner's Sons.) \$1.75.

Mr. Cox has here brought together in one volume his more recent addresses and essays, originally delivered before various bodies of students or printed in the magazines. Among many recent books upon the subject of the Fine Arts, this one is of no minor importance. Its pages are examined with thoughtful thought not only diligently watched but carefully organized and expressed, each word

filled down to the closest meaning that the author may deal the more lucidly with his many abstractions. And this is one of his chief merits, that for all his pointed felicity of phrase Mr. Cox is never heavy. He knows precisely what he means.

It is an old familiar story upon the critic that criticism is the province of those who cannot create; but surely such criticism as this is in itself creative. Although its strongest appeal may be to those who are already wise in the mysteries of art, yet it is none the less clearly within the understanding and appreciation of the layman. There are chapters upon the recent history of art, discussion of its underlying principles and instinctive tendencies, and more detailed consideration of the work of individual painters and schools of painting. The book admits you to the company of a wise and clear spoken guide, a truth seeker and truth finder whose book he has no more made than it has made him.

A CASTLE TO LET. By Mrs. Baillie Reynolds. (George H. Doran Company.) \$1.55.

It seems that there actually was a time when the sun shone kindly upon the mountain peaks in Hungary, and a young English girl found refuge in a castle for her virtual embodiment of all

her fondest dreams, with its sharp towers piercing the soft, fleecy clouds and its fortress walls gloomy and impenetrable in the sunlight. With an experience such as this it is not difficult to sympathize these days; and who has not longed to borrow the accoutrements of high romance and have a castle for one's very own? When Camilla rode through the queer little town, asleep on the hillside, for all the world like a page out of "The Pied Piper," and saw the vision enshrouded against a background of dark pines, her mind was already made up. After a thorough investigation brought to light a disquieting shadow upon the conventional legend of "Castle to Let," that was well under way. How delightful it would be to merely linger all summer long with Camilla and her castle full of young people, lastly absorbing the dimmed pageantry of the Magyar Age, without touching one's head in the least about the sharp corners and volumes of fabulous towers belonging to this period. Just to have entered in her garden, permeated with a sense of a divine honey color, would have been stimulus enough. But this is also a mystery story. We must needs track the Black Dragon of Yndala to his cave, raise the curse that has been for ten centuries over the heads of the Orenfels and see three sets of lovers happily married off to the right persons. But to those who long to find themselves involved in amazing situations this book will prove of great promise. For the wildest and most fantastic of tales with such skill that even the coolest reader must feel wondrous.

THE TERROR. By Arthur Machen. (Robert McBride & Co.) \$1.25.

To invent a really new idea for a mystery horror story of the type which Stevenson described so aptly as a "newer" is no easy matter. But so far as our memory can discover anything to the contrary, that is what Mr. Machen has done. It is a new enough conception, too, and ingenious—the revolt of the animals against Man. Suppose birds, or dogs, or horses and cattle suddenly forgot their traditional respect for the lord of creation and attacked him as they might another beast like themselves who was an enemy. There is material in that idea for a very chilly little thrill, if it were handled with good craftsmanship and imagination.

And Mr. Machen shows a very capable art in the telling. Not to spoil the story in advance, it is enough to say that you wonder for some little time whether you are not reading a careful narrative of facts, and not a story at all; and then, while you are in that mood, the story breaks upon you.

The tale is made timely, in rather unnecessary fashion, by tacking it on to the war. The savage and bestial struggle going on in the world, coupled with some vague telepathic effect of German hate, are supposed mysteriously to have brought about the revolt of the beasts against mankind. But this, as it is the least rational element in the story, is also the least important. The idea was a good one at the root, and it has been in all effectively set forth. Those who enjoy a quiet shudder at bedtime will find a good one here.

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